

PRESS RELEASE

Museum leaders gather in Ottawa for meeting of Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada

OTTAWA – On the cusp of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, leaders of Canada’s major natural history museums convene in Ottawa on October 26 and 27, 2009 for the sixth annual meeting of the Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada (ANHMC). The network was created in 2003 to enhance collaborative work in the areas of research, collections development and education about the natural environment.

“International Biodiversity Year presents a tremendous opportunity for us, as natural history museums, to develop activities and programs that will enrich Canadians’ awareness of their natural environment and how to protect it,” explains Pauline Rafferty, CEO of the ANHMC and Director of the Royal British Columbia Museum. “In addition, we are continuing with a national strategy for developing a collection that will represent all of Canada’s biodiversity.”

A special reception will be held the evening of October 27 on Parliament Hill to present the third annual Bruce Naylor Award. This honour recognizes significant contributions to the study of museum-based natural history in Canada. The 2009 recipient is Dr. Robert Cannings, a notable entomologist (insect specialist) from British Columbia. Dr. Canning has spent 29 years as Curator of Entomology at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria and has authored several books, published more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific articles and written over 100 popular articles.

Highlights of ANHMC activities for International Biodiversity Year include the grand reopening of the Canadian Museum of Nature’s public exhibitions site on May 22, 2010, as well as the launch of the Biodome of Montreal’s new Centre for Biodiversity in fall 2010. Numerous educational programs about biodiversity will take place at member sites over the year.

The ANHMC’s 16 members from west to north to east are: the Royal British Columbia Museum, Vancouver Aquarium, Royal Alberta Museum, Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage, Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Manitoba Museum, Royal Ontario Museum, Canadian Museum of Nature, Toronto Zoo, Montreal’s Nature Museums (Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Gardens and Planetarium), Redpath Museum (Montreal), New Brunswick Museum, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, and The Rooms Provincial Museum, Newfoundland and Labrador.

These institutions are responsible for preserving the record of Canada’s natural history through time. Together, member museums safeguard more than 19 million catalogued specimens of plants, animals, minerals and fossils collected over 150 years. The purpose of the national collections strategy is to ensure that this crucial record is complete and is preserved in perpetuity.

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